

CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

'THE WORLD WE LIVE IN': THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND, HELD IN THE BEETHOVENHALLE, BONN, WEST GERMANY, 5 OCTOBER 1973

Over 500 people from 35 countries, gathered in Bonn at the Third International Congress of the World Wildlife Fund on 5 October 1973, called for Governments to stabilize and ultimately reduce human populations as the principal means of conserving natural resources and achieving the highest quality of life for all mankind.

The Congress identified the human population explosion as the prime cause of the environmental crisis, resulting in sharp rises in consumption of natural resources of all kinds, and in looming crises for energy and materials. Calling on decision-makers to recognize the limited resources of Earth, the Congress said Governments should consider policies to stabilize and ultimately reduce populations according to the carrying capacity of the land and oceans.

The Congress, which was inaugurated by Mr H. D. Genscher, Minister of Home Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, and President of the World Wildlife Fund/Germany, included a series of wide-ranging addresses by distinguished international experts on environmental and conservation affairs. Professor Paul Ehrlich (USA) vividly posed the threat of the population explosion, while Dr Jacques Piccard (Switzerland) presented the problems of pollution of air, water, and soil. Dr Aurelio Peccei (Italy) reviewed the future of mankind.

Conservation of Nature in the third world was the major topic dealt with by Dr Bernhard Grzimek (Germany), who considered Africa and its great heritage of wild animals; by H. R. H. Prince Gyanendra of Nepal, who described his country's conservation programme and announced the establishment of the Mount Everest National Park; and by Ambassador Keith Johnson of Jamaica, who dealt with environmental problems.

Mrs Annemarie Renger, President of the Bundestag, addressed the Congress on environmental conservation in Germany, while Dr J. Speer, President of the German Research Society, dealt with the application of research to environmental problems.

Speaking on behalf of the United Nations' newly-established Environment Programme, its Executive Director, Mr Maurice Strong, who is also a Trustee of the World Wildlife Fund, stressed the interdependence of Man with the physical systems of the biosphere and of Man with Man in exploiting and caring for these natural systems.

The Congress was summed up by H. R. H. The Prince of the Netherlands, President of the World Wildlife Fund, with the words: 'We are aware of the rapid changes that are taking place in our world today. We are conscious of the legitimate aspirations of the poor countries and the need to provide them with a fair share of the world's resources. We are firmly resolved to do everything in our power to maintain those values, including the continued existence of wild things and wild places, that make this planet a world worth living in. It is our heritage, and I ask you all to pledge yourselves to safeguard The World We Live In.'

The 22 resolutions of the Congress, which were passed by acclamation, were mostly calls to Governments and decision-makers to act now to save the natural environment through implementation of international conventions and protection of threatened natural areas, animals, and plants. India, Kenya, and Nepal, were singled out for congratulations on their conservation efforts, and the Congress applauded the launching of cooperation between the World Wildlife Fund and the World Scout movement.

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INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON AMAZONIAN WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES, HELD AT MANAUS, BRAZIL, 25 NOVEMBER TO 1 DECEMBER 1973

This symposium was appropriately held in the heart of the Amazon region, at Manaus. It was organized by the Programme on the Tropics of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IICA-Trópicos), with the cooperation of the Brazilian Institute for Forest Development (IBDE, the governmental agency for forestry, wildlife, and national parks) and the Brazilian Agency for Fishing in the Amazon (SUDEPE).

The state of knowledge of wildlife and fisheries in the Amazonian area was reviewed in over 40 papers, and the proceedings will be published by IICA-Trópicos. Participants, totalling 105, included both scientists and administrators. Heads and specialists from official wildlife and freshwater fisheries departments in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, dealing with Amazonian problems, and scientists from research institutes and universities, took part in the meeting. In addition, FAO and IUCN were represented.

The 15 recommendations included proposals concerning:

- Signing and ratification of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
- Control of illegal traffic in endangered species using rivers and other channels of commerce.
- Cooperation in cataloguing Amazonian species that are now being harvested, and in assessing their population status.
- Preparation of lists of endangered species in the Amazon region, using the IUCN Red Data Book classification.
- Establishment of systems of national parks and reserves in all Amazonian countries—for the conservation of adequate representative samples of Amazonia to meet the needs of education, research, gene-pools, and, where possible, tourism.